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SUBJECT: CHAD: ANXIETIES OVER REFUGEE PROTECTION

¶1. (SBU) Summary: UN Resrep agrees with the fears of the Chadian government it will be unable adequately to protect refugees and IDPs if, as he thinks likely, there are increased attacks over the next month before the rainy season. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Kingsley Amaning, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System in Chad, met the Ambassador April 18, on his return from New York, where he had been during the dramatic events of the previous week. He complained that he had not sensed a level of urgency at UN headquarters that he believed conditions in Chad merited.

¶3. (SBU) Amaning said that the ultimata handed out by the Chadian government April 15 on oil and refugees were, he believed, a reflection of desperation. Deby feared that his shambolic forces would not be able to meet the external military threat without rapid and expensive arms purchases (even with the presence of the French military) -- which meant immediate freeing up of oil revenues. By the same token, he feared, all the more correctly, that his forces, overextended on regime survival, would not be able to cope with attacks on refugee camps and on Chadian tribes in the East.

¶4. (SBU) Amaning said that Deby's decision to take on Khartoum, Esso, the World Bank, and the United Nations all at the same time -- while insisting on maintaining the election on May 3 -- was "mind-boggling" and seemed self-defeating. However, Amaning said that he shared the worry about the capability of the Chadian armed forces to ensure survival of the regime, not to mention protect the populace of the East. If what had taken place last week -- the incursion into Ndjamena -- were multiplied three-fold, as seemed likely from reports from across the border, assistance from the French would likely not be enough. The French had no coherent plan, while the United Nations and the rest of the international community had tagged along behind the French. The French Ambassador was not happy with the situation. Frustrated with the lack of strategy and pilloried on all sides, the French Ambassador (a former military officer) had told Amaning that he preferred the military career to diplomacy and was eager for the end of his assignment on July 14.

15. (SBU) Amaning said that, while it was difficult to get a handle on what was happening along the border east of Goz Beida and Goz Amer, he was worried that more and more janjaweed (note: Arabs from Darfur but typically originally from Chad and still viewed as Chadians) were moving into the zones vacated by the now thoroughly terrified local populace (note: mainly Dadjo ethnicity). Attacks were bad enough, but if these vacated areas were now being settled in the weeks before the commencement of the rainy season, the difficulties were multiplied. First, there was the diminishing prospect that these Dadjo IDPs would return home. Second, there was the prospect that the new settlers, in need of food to get through the rainy season and in need of fuel and vehicles to effect their continued attacks, would find the large depots of food, fuel, vehicles, and communications equipment held by the UN in the area irresistible. Finally, there was the prospect that they would find attacks on the refugee camps, as recruiting centers for the Darfur rebels, also irresistible.

16. (SBU) Thus, Amaning reasoned, Deby had a basis for sounding the alarm on the refugees. Very likely he would not be able to protect the refugees or assure the return of the IDPs, and the international community would indeed have to take greater responsibility. Amaning said he particularly wanted to see if the French would be willing to expand their mandate in the East.

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